

A DESCRIPTION OF WARNER'S HOLLOW

JOHN M. JOSEPH,
Bowling Green State University,
Bowling Green, Ohio

It is the purpose of this report to describe an area in Ohio of great natural beauty with which it is believed that very few people are familiar. The Hollow is quite inconspicuous when passed from a distance on the main route and this circumstance alone has largely contributed to its isolation. In spite of the fact that a 4H camp has been erected upon the southwest rim of the region, very little attention has been attracted to the Hollow, scientific attention in particular.

The author feels that biological potentialities of Warner's Hollow are enormous. This area would very probably make an interesting ecological study.

Warner's Hollow is situated in the extreme southwestern portion of Ashtabula County and near the town of Windsor. As shown in Fig. 1, the Hollow can be reached on routes 534 (south from Geneva-on-the-Lake) and 322 (east from Cleveland) as both roads pass through Windsor.

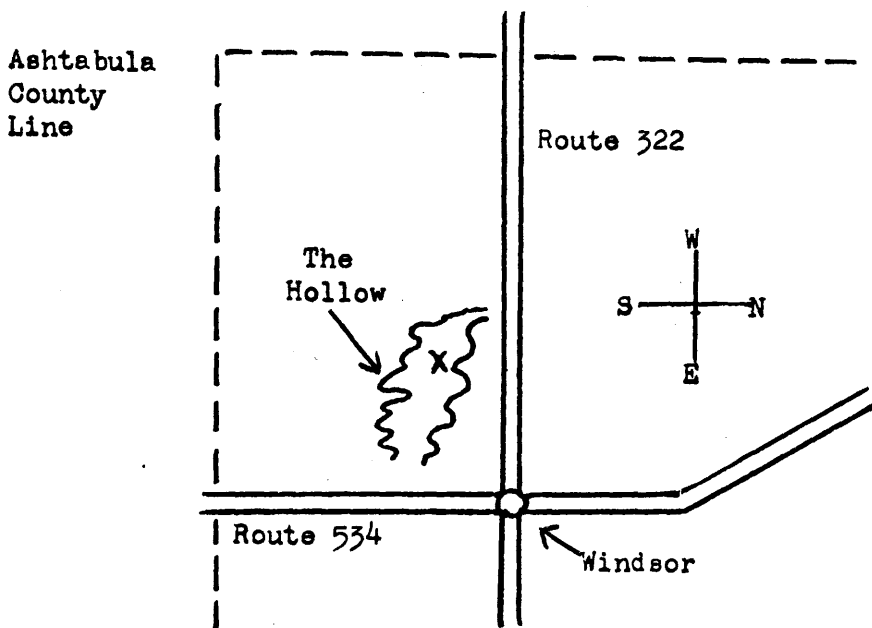


FIG. 1

The region extends lengthwise in an east and west plane. The floor of the Hollow is quite convoluted, the distance along the bottom from end to end being approximately two miles. At its widest place the Hollow is roughly 1200 feet and its narrowest about 20 feet, the distance being estimated from the top of the north wall to the top of the south wall.

The Hollow is a glacier and river worn gorge which opens sharply in the midst of gently rolling landscape that characterizes this portion of northeastern Ohio.

A stream flows from west to east along the floor of the gorge. The stream is called Phelps Creek and is a tributary of the Grand River. The Creek is spring-

fed while in the Hollow and is quite shallow except for occasional pot holes of depth from six inches to six feet. One spring of very fine cold water is located on the north wall and may be readily reached by means of a foot path which winds along the cliff.

According to Mr. Tom White, who owns a considerable portion, it is believed that a part of the area was once an Indian fort. Arrowheads and similar relics have been found in and around the gorge.

The rock content of the Hollow is predominantly sandstone, shale, and some limestone. Fossil shells of mollusks have been found in the sandstone of the south wall, Pelecypod shells mostly represented.

A considerable portion of the gorge walls are bare rock and either sheer or jutting and sometimes both. The highest point of the Hollow above the stream is located on the south wall and is roughly 110 feet in height.

Imprints of fossil leaves and tree bark have been observed on the rocks in the bottom of the gorge near the creek.

An isolated formation called table rock is found rising from the floor of the Hollow and is roughly 45 feet in height. This structure was apparently dislodged by a previous rockfall possibly caused by extensive undermining of the north wall by river erosion. The rock top is quite flat and covers about 600 square feet. It is tilted somewhat toward the north. Although in recent years the top of table rock has been somewhat defaced by campers, there are still visible near the south edge and overlooking the stream, a pair of footprints of a girl's bare feet. Popular legend as related by several natives claims that, "once an Indian maiden, pursued by two male Indians with dire intent, stood finally upon this spot while the earth here was yet soft and debated whether or not to jump." Also according to popular legend she jumped and so it goes on to state, "the footprints have remained to this day." Actually, one of the local dwellers was an amateur sculptor, who, using his daughter as a model, chiseled the footprints in the rock surface. Opening near the base of table rock are several small openings about six inches in diameter which lead inside to a chamber known as Barometer Cave, so called because of the response of its air currents in relation to weather fluctuations.

Winding along the walls on both sides are narrow footpaths, some located beneath far-jutting rocks. These paths are largely the result of natural conditions.

Warner's Hollow is an abrupt change from the surrounding landscape, not only from a geological standpoint but also that it is characteristic of a Canadian Life Zone.

Considerable stands of Native Hemlock are present as well as Mountain Maple. Ground Yew is well represented. Lichens are very numerous. The Bryophytes are plentiful. Liverworts and various types of mosses thriving in shady nooks and on the dripping wet rock walls, other types of mosses on the woody summits of the walls are also plentiful.

The Pteridophytes are well represented, there being several different kinds of ferns and Equisetineae. The Club mosses are especially abundant, being found in the rich shade of bottom land and upper woodland in the immediate vicinity of ground Yew.

The animal life is quite similar to the surrounding countryside with the possible exception of the Newts and Salamanders. The Caudata are represented here by *Triturus viridescens* (most numerous), *Plethodon jordani*, and *Eurycea lucifuga*. These forms of the Caudata are so plentiful that they may be observed crawling about in the wooded areas and among the rocky ledges of the Hollow all day long.

The Author wishes to express most sincere appreciation for the aid given in this endeavor by the Junior 4H Group of Ashtabula County and also hopes that some curiosity has been incited by this paper so that Warner's Hollow may receive more of the attention which it deserves.